

Vigo Park Dept. Plans Expansion Of Rural Recreational Facilities

By CAROLYN TOOPS
Tribune Staff Writer

The Rural Recreation Concept is the single most important development of the Vigo County Park and Recreation Department in its first 10 years, Supt. Keith Ruble believes.

Continued expansion of recreational facilities in rural areas of the county is planned for 1977. Several projects are under way.

In addition, the Rural Recreation Concept will figure largely in the long-range master park plan now being updated, the superintendent said.

However, Ruble urges caution and prudence, noting that though some capital funds to build are available, the department does not have the funds at present to maintain additional facilities because of the frozen tax rate.

Both Fowler Park and Prairie Creek Park serve many citizens with excellent leisure opportunities that would not have been possible without a county park department, Ruble continued, "but this does not answer the leisure needs of many people, including children, who live in small rural towns like Riley, Prairieton, West Terre Haute, Fontanet and New Goshen."

In his annual report, to be presented to the County Park Board at a meeting Monday at 4 p.m. at the American Red Cross Building, notes the population

trend from high populated urban areas, back to rural areas such as small towns and subdivisions, many of which are void of recreational facilities.

School consolidation also took away "community centers" in some areas, Ruble pointed out.

The department has been moving slowly but surely in providing rural recreation areas in the past several years, in several cases acquiring abandoned school buildings and grounds.

At Glenn Center (formerly Glenn Junior High School) during 1976 improvements included installation of new softball bleachers, new asphalt covering for tennis/basketball courts and new ceiling covering in the gymnasium.

In the West Terre Haute area, development of the Lee Field Park (old Concannon School grounds) in 1976 included new road and parking area, creative play area, shelter, restroom facility, improvements to ball field and removal of old track.

Ruble plans to contact Supt. Harmon Baldwin of the Vigo County School Corporation to discuss the possibility of having teachers participate in summer recreation programs in rural areas (Lee Fields Park, the South Seventh Street Park in West Terre Haute, Fontanet and New Goshen) as the VCSC does in cooperation with the Terre Haute city park system.

The annual report notes that Hunt's Nature Center has been in operation for six years and has given children and adults a better understanding of the environment.

Major projects at Fowler Park last year were a log barn meeting building (to be completed in 1977); new park shelter; Camp Clover (June to August, in cooperation with the Vigo County Extension Office); the fourth annual Pioneer Festival in October and a picnic for the blind.

At Prairie Creek Park, the newest of the large parks, work on the new tent camping area was completed in 1976.

High on the list of 1977 plans is the long-term lease of the Fontanet Bean Dinner grounds, Holloway's Grove. The groundwork has been done to secure the lease.

The county park board is expected to discuss the various improvements projected for the Bean Dinner grounds at the January meeting Monday.

Development of a new playground at Prairieton, Smith Park, will also be discussed.

Ruble's six month action plan (January through May 1977) also calls for continuation of ground fireplace sites to camping and picnic areas throughout parks and construction of a creative playground at Glenn Recreation Center.

Park Board members include Max G. Miller, president; Susan McCarthy, vice-president; John William Thompson, secretary; and members Ruel Fox Burns Sr., John Etling and Burch Harlan.

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Vigo Park Master Plan Updated

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By CAROLYN TOOPS
Tribune Staff Writer

The Vigo County Park and Recreation Department is completing a major task, updating its comprehensive master plan to cover the next five years.

Max G. Miller, president of the County Park and Recreation Board, noted that the master plan is a valuable instrument for local citizens and the board to use in making decisions on the local park system.

One notable aspect of the update (it's the second update of the 1967 master plan) is that it's been done by park staffers themselves, not by outside consultants, and for considerably less money.

County Park Superintendent Keith Ruble, who joined the department in 1969, and Celia McLean, director of Glenn Recreation Center for the past three and a half years, are highly qualified by education and experience, and undertook the update early this year.

Celia had some free time when Glenn Center was forced to close temporarily because of the severe weather and heating

problems, and has been involved in the "spadework" and research for the update.

Park superintendent Ruble has also made every minute count, working on the update whenever he had a

There was also very close cooperation from City Park and Recreation Department professionals Mike Reyher and Dick Hanley, Ruble said. The City of Terre Haute's Master Park Plan is also being updated by their own staffers.

"We feel we can work with the city and county best," Ruble commented, adding that "we know what's here, what's available and what the people want in a park system."

"We also want something we can work with, which has goals that we can achieve," the park superintendent added.

The county's master plan includes both city and county facilities, while the city's will cover only parks under the city's jurisdiction, Ruble explained.

The update places more emphasis on rural recreation facilities, several of which are under development. This has been the trend for the past several years, Ruble said. He remarked that the National Park and Recreation Association is finally recognizing the importance of rural recreation facilities. Most funds in the past have gone toward recreation in

urban areas, he said.

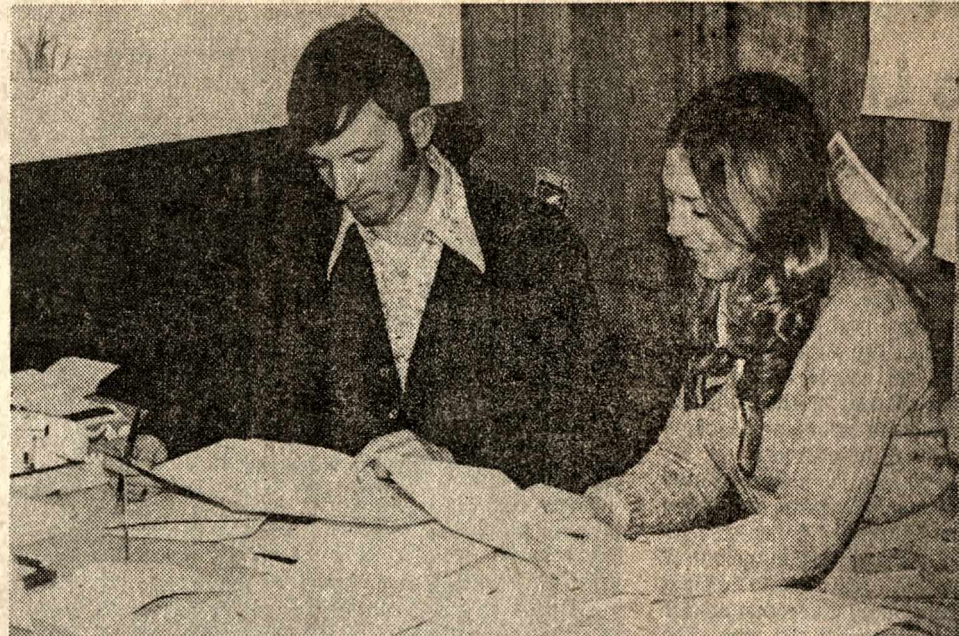
Ruble thinks ordinances are needed in land use planning, requiring subdividers to set aside land for recreational areas in subdivisions.

Vigo County still needs a major park in the north sector, Ruble stated. The two large parks, Fowler and Prairie Creek, are both in the southern

area.

Smaller facilities operated by the department are Glenn Center; New Goshen Little Red Schoolhouse; Flescher Memorial Woods (which contains one of the best remaining stands of pecan trees); and two playgrounds in the West Terre Haute area.

Plans are being completed



UPDATING VIGO COUNTY'S MASTER PARK PLAN these past few months has kept Keith Ruble, superintendent of the County Park and Recreation Department, and Celia McLean, director of Glenn Recreation Center, quite busy. They're "getting it all together" now and will present it to the County Park Board soon. The comprehensive five-year plan is a major tool for the Park Board to use in making decisions. Ruble and McLean worked closely with Dick Hanley and Mike Reyher of the Terre Haute Park and Recreation Department, who have been updating the city's long-range plan during this same period.

House of Photography Photo

for the leasing of about 17 acres in Nevins Township from the Fontanet Bean Dinner Association. The county park department hopes to have this facility open in the summer.

Ruble will report to the Park Board Monday at 4 p.m. at the American Red Cross building on current projects and plans for opening parks this spring.

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City Offers New Community Affairs File Play Program Site

Plans are being completed by the Terre Maute Park and Recreation Department for the summer recreation program.

Recreation Director Michael Reyher reports that a sixth site has been added to the organized playground activities for neighborhood parks. The daily activities will be planned this year for the Hyte Community Center, 14th and Deming streets. also.

The supervised playground activities have been conducted in Collett Park, 7th Street and Maple Avenue; Sheridan Park, 2825 Buckeye St.; Voorhees Park, 230 W. Voorhees St.; Herz-Rose Park, 1515 Locust St.; and Thompson Park, 1721 Oak St.

The tennis program will be expanded this year also to be offered in four parks instead of

two. Previously, tennis instruction was available in Collett Park and Rea Park, 1115 Davis Ave., but with the installation of new tennis courts in Deming Park, Fruitridge Avenue and Ohio Boulevard, and Brittlebank Park, 22nd and Grant streets, tennis will also be offered there.

The swimming pools will be a part of the recreation program again in Sheridan, Voorhees and Deming parks.

The yearly baseball program is planned for Spencer Park, 14th Street and 7th Avenue.

Reyher said the department is accepting applications for qualified recreation staff members with experience to work in the programs. Interviews will be conducted at the Park and Recreation Department office in City Hall until Friday, April 29.

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City Parks Plan Summer Of Fun for Local Children

15 MAY 1 1977

By EULETA TURNER
Tribune Staff Writer

Summer 1977 in Terre Haute through the City Park Department appears to hold a lot of happy involvement for children, youth and adults with softball competition to begin Monday, May 2; swimming pools to open Friday, June 3; Dobbs Memorial Park Nature Study already under way, and baseball, tennis and playground supervised and tutored programs to begin Monday, June 13.

Mike Reyher, supervisor of the recreation program on the staff of Park Superintendent Pat Dougherty, was elated about this year's program which includes a number of additions and improvements in facilities as well as program, with special emphasis on providing entertainment and recreation for senior citizens.

The latter especially pertains to the new Dobbs Nature Center where "Senior Citizens' Week" will be observed Sunday, May 22, through Saturday, May 28. The department will provide special shuttle buses for the participants. Reyher noted, and groups desiring to be conducted on the 45 minute to one hour tour of the area, view films pertaining to the subject matter and other planned features, are invited to call the Nature Center office, 877-1095.

The invitation is open to any other groups who may wish to reserve a special time or groups and individuals who are welcome to visit the center without reservation any day and be conducted on a tour or

meander through the area on their own.

The center is open Monday through Saturday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sundays from noon until 6 p.m.

The school segment of the program got under way with dedication of the Center's main instructional building in February and was held last month with the staff now working out additional facets of the program's trail tours, fossil study, lake study and animal habitat edification phases, Reyher advised.

Two fulltime naturalists are staffing the center with the help of a parttime member. The naturalists are Ron Helms, Indiana State University life science graduate, who is working toward his Master's Degree in the same field, and Sharon Blair, a Ball State University biology education undergraduate with a BSU Master's in natural sciences.

In cooperation with the Vigo County School Corporation, all fifth grade youngsters have been enjoying the outdoor educational area.

"We plan to extend the evening hours as we get more hours of daylight," Reyher stated, adding: "We are working on a self-guiding trail system where individuals can come into the office, pick up a trail guide pamphlet and walk the trails themselves with posted trail plaque legends to relay information about especially outstanding areas."

The softball program, to begin Monday evening and continue through Labor Day, will involve some 45 men and

women's teams with three games each evening at Memorial Park, north 4th Street and Eighth Avenue, under the management of Richard Duby and supervision of Indiana American Softball Association Commissioner Wayne Myers.

The field is lighted and has been improved this year by the park department with a complete overhaul of the playing field, installation of new, permanent-type team benches and a new chain-link fence around the dug-out areas.

The so-called "fast-pitch" program will also present pre-and-post-season tournament as well as "special tourney competition" through the season, according to Reyher.

The swimming pools in Deming, Voorhees and Sheridan parks will be open from noon until 6 p.m. daily seven days a week as of June 3 under the management of Paul Krock (Deming), Carl Coons (Voorhees) and Greg Hooper (Sheridan).

The filtering units, which caused a shut-down of the pools last year, have been completely reconditioned and all other mechanical phases of the pools have been overhauled "and are ready to go" Reyher declared.

The playground program at Collett, Herz-Rose, Thompson, Voorhees and Sheridan parks has been expanded this year to include the Charles T. Hytes Community Center at S. 13th St. and College Ave. where a nine-weeks program will feature arts and crafts, music, dramatic, gymnastics and other areas through Aug. 12.

Two especially trained recreational supervisors will be on hand from 9 a.m. until noon and again from 1 p.m. until 4 p.m. daily to supervise the play and class groups. Indiana State University park and recreation students are among those instructors being utilized in the program.

The tennis program will also run from June 13 through Aug. 12 at Deming's three courts, Collett's four courts (two lighted), Rea's nine courts (all lighted) and Brittlebank Park, S. 20th and Grant south., where three new courts have been constructed.

Both children and adults may avail themselves of tennis instruction at any of the aforementioned sites, Reyher advised, or progress at their own individual abilities.

The City Park Department's summer baseball program for youngsters will again be held at Spencer Park on Eighth Avenue between north 14th and north 15th streets. Scott Curry, Woodrow Wilson teacher and basketball and baseball coach, will be the athletic supervisor for the nine-weeks period.

Youngsters may register any day Monday through Friday, June 13-17, for both the baseball or tennis competitions in the respective areas in which they wish to participate.

The remaining segment of the CPD's recreational program is golf offered at Rea Park and the new Lost Creek course, east of the city along the south side of U.S. Highway 40.

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Summer Programs Listed For County Park Facilities

Community Affairs File

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The parks, recreation centers, playgrounds, nature centers, historical features and areas for swimming, boating, fishing and other facets of the Vigo County Park and Recreational Department are getting off to a "bigger and better than ever" season of summer fun under the direction of Keith Reuble, VCPRD superintendent.

A number of new improvements have been made or are in the working or planning stage, according to Reuble who expressed the department's goal with the declaration that: "We want people to come and enjoy the parks and we ask, in return, that they help us keep the parks clean."

Reuble undoubtedly has a special affection for the areas under his supervision for he has been the predominant factor in their planning and construction, most of the structures having experienced his personal hand in their building.

At Fowler Park's historic log cabin village, Reuble has been particularly instrumental in the removal of the aged structures from their former county sites and transfer to the Fowler Pioneer Village where they were reconstructed.

Members of the park board have also given of their time and talent in working on the buildings as well as numerous other volunteers interested in creating a bit of the past for children of today to view first hand.

The park concept was visualized nearly 20 years ago by then county commissioner Harry "Keeter" Brentlinger, who approached coal company officials of the worked-out strip mine land to enter into an agreement whereby it could be made into a swimming, fishing and camping area for use of county residents and others visiting recreationists.

In exchange for mineral rights the county held in the southeastern part of Vigo, under land for which upper access

the coal company would have to negotiate with the land owners of the top stratas, the county was made owner of the lake and surrounding area with a dam and road atop it constructed by coal company crews at no expense to the county.

Probably, Brentlinger's original envisioning of the property would have fallen far short of what has today become reality with Reuble's guidance and the help of various groups he has enlisted.

One of these is Indiana State University's Department of Recreation, whose students have accumulated class hours by planning such VCPRD features as wooden creative playground structures. None of the composite wooden structures in the several park playgrounds is exactly alike and they lend themselves totally to the inherent desire of children to climb, slide and swing in freedom of movement.

Except for the camping area and its utility features, Fowler is open to all persons without charge. If the weather is favorable, the beach will be open for swimming the Memorial Day weekend (May 28-30) and remain open through Labor Day (Sept. 5) with lifeguards on duty.

The camping area offers sites for both water and electric facilities as well as a waste disposal station, bath house and comfort station facilities. There is also a covered bridge and shelter house in the area.

The camping is open the year round, however, this year a 10 p.m. closing of the park gates will be imposed. Persons within the park may remain throughout the night; however, once an individual leaves the park after curfew time, he will not be permitted re-entry until the next morning's park gate opening time.

Reuble explained that the curfew imposition was necessary to prevent drive-through vehicles or boisterous after-hours individuals from disturb-

ing overnight campers.

Relative to fishing in Fowler as well as Prairie Creek Park, located about five miles to the southwest, Reuble noted that "a fish kill will be undertaken shortly in both lakes" as a result of the severe winter just past.

Many of the parks' fish population were killed in the extreme weather conditions and a chemical will now be added to the waters to kill off and clean the lakes of undesirable fish that would prey on fingerlings of a planned restocking program, Reuble noted.

He indicated it will be two or three years before fishing is again really good in either of the two lakes.

The annual Pioneer Days are scheduled Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 1 and 2, with park visitors invited to visit six log cabins already existent and a new log barn currently under construction. It is expected to be ready for the fall event, Reuble advised.

In addition to its historic features and included appointments, the barn is to offer an interpretive center and meeting room which is to be made available to groups and organizations for meetings. It will be complete with kitchen and restroom facilities.

Other county park and recreation areas under Reuble's jurisdiction include the following:

• **PRAIRIE CREEK PARK**, south of Pimento and west of U.S. 41 on county road "147 DR.", between 41 and Indiana Highway 63, (according to the county map) has 17 acres developed for camping (with utilities), fishing, swimming, boating and picnicking replete with a creative-style playground.

A large stand of sugar Maple trees has opened the prospect of an old-fashioned maple syrup camp construction. A volunteer group from the Farmers Union, who have dubbed themselves "The Green Thumb Group", plan to establish such a camp

next February and March, Reuble stated.

Visitors are to be invited to watch the tapping of the trees, gathering of the sugar maple sap and the evaporation of it into the finish sweet syrup.

• **GLENN COMMUNITY CENTER**, 6835 Wabash Ave.—A new "creative" playground is to be constructed this summer, the appropriation already having been passed by the County Council and now awaiting State Board of Accounts Approval before construction can begin. Reuble estimated that the SBA approval of the funds "could be forthcoming within a month".

Most of the center's indoor program of the winter months will be curtailed due to the lack of air conditioning facilities and the activities will be mainly outdoor events during the summer.

• **HUNT'S NATURE CENTER** in southwestern Vigo County is a segment of the county park system that was developed by Dr. Edgar Hunt, retired physician and natural lover, who made the acreage available to the department without charge except for the annual real estate taxes.

It encompasses a log cabin in which instructional classes are conducted preparatory to tours through the woodland preserve. Many children of local and area schools have already been to the nature center.

• **KERMIT R. FLESHER MEMORIAL WOODS** in southwestern Vigo is a 36-acre flood plain of a truly unique stand of trees. "There is nothing like it in the state of Indiana," Reuble declared, adding, "The state is interested in making it an established state nature preserve while still leaving it in the county park department ownership." The "flood plain" terminology means that it is located in the river bottom lowlands and is periodically inundated by waters.

• **LEE FIELDS PARK**, located on Ferguson Hill, north of West Terre Haute on U.S. Highway 150 (Concannon School), has a small playground area with creative wood type facilities to accommodate children of the area.

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- **WEST TERRE HAUTE**, a small playground is located on South 7th Street similar to the Ferguson Hill installation.

- **NEW GOSHEN SCHOOL HOUSE** is located several miles north of West Terre Haute on U.S. 150, where the former two-room school building has been converted into a community center in one of the rooms and a restored schoolroom of early Hoosier history in the other.

Especially during the late May-early June Banks of the Wabash Festival, the area is open to visitors

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Ruble Says Grant Will Create New Jobs

Vigo County Park and Recreation Supt. Keith Ruble is enthusiastic about the park department's \$11,411 grant through Title VI of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA), which provides for the employment of 11 people this summer by the county park system.

"We've hired nine persons already, and they're working in both general maintenance and security," Ruble explained.

"It's great to have security at the gates at both Fowler and Prairie Creek parks," the superintendent said, adding that "the campers at both parks appreciate having someone on duty at night."

This is the first time the county park department has had this "luxury" of being able to close the gates at night. The campers feel more secure, and incidents have been at a minimum, Ruble noted.

The hot, dry weather has freed park workers from having to do as much grass cutting this summer (so far, anyway) and consequently, the time is being used to good advantage for other maintenance and "housekeeping" chores and some construction projects, Ruble said.

Some of the Title VI employees work days, others at night. Ruble said discussion is under way about having some of these assist with the Vigo County Fair next month.

Attendance at both Fowler and Prairie Creek Parks is "very good," the superintendent noted. Prairie Creek's camping facilities are

gradually becoming known to more area residents and use of the park is picking up, he said.

Also at Prairie Creek, tennis lessons are very popular. Fishing is good in the little lake there. Ruble is conferring this week with a Department of Natural Resources biologist to discuss restocking the large lake. It was to have been ready to open for fishing this summer but the severe winter weather caused a massive fish kill.

"Things are going along very smoothly, and the Park Department is in really good shape this year. Title VI is a big help," the superintendent remarked. ing the 1978 budget ready for presentation to the Park Board for its regular monthly meeting next Monday, June 27. Also on that agenda is a report on the public meeting on the new community park in Prairieeton now being developed.

Land was given by the Virginia Phelps family and the new park is to be called the "George and Ida Smith Park."

Residents of the area will have a chance Wednesday night to express their opinions about the planned new park in Prairieeton across from the firehouse.

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County Park System *Vigo Co Recreation (Vigo Co)* Receives \$11,411 Grant

The Vigo County Park and Recreation Department has been awarded a grant totaling \$11,411 through Title VI of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA), providing for the employment of 11 people this summer by the county park system.

"We've hired nine persons already and they're working in both general maintenance and security," explained Superintendent Keith Ruble. "It's great to have security at the gates at both Fowler and Prairie Creek parks."

This is the first time the county park department has been able to close the gates at night, resulting in a greater sense of security for campers and a minimum of incidents, reports indicate.

The hot, dry weather has freed park workers from having to do as much grass cutting as normal, affording workers to spend their time at other maintenance and construction chores, according to Ruble.

Attendance at both parks is "very good," noted Ruble, with Prairie Creek's camping facilities becoming gradually better known.

"Things are going along very smoothly, and the Park Department is in really good shape this year. Title VI is a big help," the superintendent concluded.

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County park department gets \$26,000 HUD grant

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Parks & Recreation (Vigo Co)

By CAROLYN TOOPS
Tribune Staff Writer

A \$26,000 Community Block Development grant through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development will be used for recreational facilities in the West Terre Haute area, Keith Ruble, superintendent of the Vigo County Park and Rec-

reation Department, said Monday.

"We're lucky to receive this money," Ruble commented, adding that recently HUD has "changed its outlook" and now apparently prefers to award grants for demolition of dilapidated properties, rather than for augmenting and im-

proving recreational facilities in rural areas.

Plans call for construction of a multipurpose court at the Lee Fields Park (old Concannon School grounds); improvements to the South Seventh Street park, as well as addition of basketball facilities; and development of a small park at Dresser.

Ruble, after checking with state agencies last week, reports that notices to bidders will be published soon.

"If the money holds out, we hope to make the multipurpose a court a doublewide," Ruble explained. He said it will be of substantial benefit to West Terre Haute area residents.

Ruble said that the Park Department attorney, William Maher, was in the process of drawing up a contract for rental of the new meeting room in the log barn at Fowler Park. The fee will be \$10 for persons wishing to use the room, Ruble said, adding that "this is not a deposit."

Those renting the room are to leave it in good condition and are responsible for any breakage, the superintendent noted.

Plans are progressing for Vigo County's own maple festival next spring at Prairie Creek Park, Ruble continued, as construction of the log sugar camp is about two-thirds complete.

"The logs are up, the floor is poured, and we have to finish the fireplace," Ruble said. The foundation for the evaporator and the plumbing and electrical work remain to be done, he stated.